

—  Trees • and • Shrubs  —

HEDGE, WINDBREAK AND TIMBER.

VALUABLE USES TO WHICH THE OSAGE CAN BE PUT.

AS a hedge plant the osage is too rapid a grower to be easily kept in shape, and requires too great an amount of labor at a season of the year when all work is pushing, and it is almost impossible for the farmer to attend to it when care is most needed. There is but one way that we have ever discovered to keep a hedge in good shape, and that is to trim three times each summer, and in seasons of unusual growth four times. The trimming should always be when the new growth is soft and before the thorns have hardened, as then the twigs cut off will shrivel up, and there will be no thorns left on the ground; but the farmer with a mile or two of hedge cannot—or does not—always get the work done in time, and so the hedge is soon out of shape and thorns scattered along the edges of the fields.

When the osage is allowed to grow into a tree it makes a straight, smooth trunk which is entirely free from thorns, and with its glossy green leaves is a tree of more than ordinary beauty. It is very easily worked, as, like the locust, it chips freely, splits easily, and when green is easily cut, but becomes very hard and dense as it seasons.

A correspondent in Ohio, writing on this subject, says:—This week I passed a neglected osage hedge which had been allowed to grow for probably twenty years unmolested, and the entire line would average ten good posts to the rod, and in some places sixteen to twenty good posts could be cut in this distance, as some of them were large enough to split into two posts at the but, and long enough to make a second post at the top cut.

Now this suggests a very valuable use for the osage, which is that we combine the benefits of a wind break and a fence, while growing valuable timber. We have evidently mistaken the nature of the plant while trying to dwarf it and keep it down, for like "Banquo's Ghost," it won't "down," but it possesses all the desirable qualities for a wind break and a fence for cattle and horses.

The common price for plants is \$2.50 per thousand, and eight plants to the rod, costing two cents, will be all that are needed for this kind of a fence. In three years, or four at the farthest, they will be large enough to turn cattle and then all that is needed to make a perfect fence of it for all kinds of stock, will be pannels of common board fence made of three six-inch boards set along the bases, secured by a stake at the bottom and loosely wired at the ends to one of the growing plants.